

UNPACKING HATE

Objectives

- Students will explore the things they hate, the origins of those feelings, and how they learned to express it.
- Students will create a spectrum line that conveys their feelings about a myriad of topics.
- Students will understand how to listen and engage in dialogue with those who have different feelings and perspectives than their own.

Materials needed

- Room for students to make a spectrum line between two points in the space.

Activity

In the play *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* by Anna Deavere Smith, one of the characters says, “The insanity that I carry with me started when I took the beating from the police. That’s where the insanity came in... So from that day on, I had hate in me.”

- There are varying degrees of hate which will be explored in this activity. For example, no one hates washing dishes the same way you might hate horror movies.
- Take some time to define hate as a group.
- Share with the class that a lot of our negative feelings and emotions come from memories, or times in our past that still resonate with us today.
- Ask students to stand on a spectrum ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree for each of the statements below. Those feeling neutral should remain in the middle.
- While students are making their choices, have them consider: Why do you feel that way? When did it start? Was it a moment or event? Was it a person?
- Examples of “I hate” prompts:
 - I hate vegetables.
 - I hate traffic.
 - I hate Chipotle.
 - I hate surprises.
 - I hate when people Facetime me unannounced.
 - I hate the dust Cheetos leaves on fingers.
 - I hate homework.
 - I hate reading books.
 - I hate lectures from adults.
 - I hate school.
 - I hate politics.
 - I hate the police.
 - I hate police brutality.
 - I hate the justice system.
 - I hate the government.
 - I hate not knowing.

Reflection Questions

- Which statements resonated with you the most?
- Were you shocked at some of the positions people took?
- Were you shocked at some of the positions you took?
- Do you have specific memories of what made you hate a thing?

While you watch the play, you will see opinions on topics that are on completely different sides of the spectrum. Pay attention to where these feelings and emotions are coming from. When and why did they start to feel this way. Then take some time to examine yourself. Think about your own story and your own experiences. Investigate why those feelings exist.

Lesson Extensions

This activity can be useful in having important conversations and in developing necessary conversation skills (listening and responding) which can lead into other creative activities (like writing dialogue).

Lesson Variations

The number of “I hate” prompts are countless and should be adjusted to speak to the particular interests of the students.

As seen in the examples provided, the subject matter can range from light and shallow prompts (low exposure) to heavier and deeper prompts (high exposure).

Students can generate their own list of prompts which can be used for this activity.